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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PBTS](#) [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [PTER](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: KRG SINJARI CALLS FOR PKK AMNESTY, MAKHMOUR CAMP
DEMILITARIZATION

REF: BAGHDAD 04371

Classified By: RRT Leader James Yellin, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

This is an Erbil Regional Reconstruction Team cable

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Minister of Interior Karim Sinjari told RRTOFFs on December 4 and 5 that steps to resolve the presence of the PKK (the Kurdistan Workers Party) in Iraq are finally moving forward but face continuing difficulties with the Government of Turkey and the Government of Iraq in Baghdad. Sinjari said the planned tripartite talks among the U.S. Iraq, and Turkey provide hope but stressed that amnesty from Turkey would be essential for PKK disarmament or refugee returns. UNHCR representatives met with Sinjari on December 5 to establish a mechanism for demilitarization and registration of the refugees in Makhmour camp. END SUMMARY

PKK ACTIVITY

¶2. (C) In a meeting with RRTOFFs on December 4, KRG Minister of Interior Sinjari blamed the government in Baghdad for registering the PKK as a political party and thereby allowing PKK and front organizations such as the Kurdish Democratic Solutions Party (KDSP) to have offices in the Kurdistan Region. (Note: Although Sinjari claimed the KRG has closed all PKK offices in Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, and Dohuk provinces in conformity with U.S. requests, the local National Democratic Institute office told RRTOFFs that the Erbil office of the KDSP reopened one week after its supposed closure.)

¶4. (C) Turkish Kurds resident in northern Iraq do not uniformly support the PKK, Sinjari said. He claimed that Turkey's capture of PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan led the PKK to moderate its independence rhetoric and subsequently lose support among Turkish Kurds in Iraq. Sinjari commented that PKK members who leave the party are "Turkish"

rather than
part of the KRG population and will still be "under control."
Sinjari
also said that, contrary to Turkish claims, the PKK launches
no attacks
into Turkey from the Kurdistan Region.

TRIPARTITE TALKS

16. (C) Sinjari said no tripartite talks among the U.S.,
Turkey, and
Iraqi envoys have occurred, but U.S. Special Envoy for
Countering the
PKK General Joseph W. Ralston has held bilateral discussions
with the
Iraqi Special Envoy for Countering the PKK Minister of State
for
National Security Shirwan al-Waili, the KRG Special Envoy for
Countering
the PKK Minister of Interior Karim Sinjari, and with Turkey's
Special
Envoy for Countering the PKK General Edip Baser. The KRG and
Turkish
envoys have not yet met with each other, Sinjari noted.

17. (C) Sinjari said the planned tripartite talks provide hope
but
stressed that Turkey needs to guarantee Kurdish rights and
safety for
this hope to be realized. He suggested that 90 percent of
PKK fighters
would lay down arms and return to Turkey if it declared a

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general
amnesty. He claimed that some PKK leaders support tripartite
talks.
(Comment: PKK leaders are unlikely to support an initiative
that
reduces the party's size and influence. We agree with the
analysis of
Sinjari's Kurdistan Democratic Party - that a
Turkish-recognized
political role for the PKK would encourage PKK support for
the
tripartite talks and the disarming of PKK fighters.)

SINJARI'S THOUGHTS ON MAKHMOUR

18. (C) Turkey wants to use the residents of the Makhmour
refugee camp in
Ninewah Province as "hostages" against KRG policies, said
Sinjari. He
likened Makhmour to a densely-populated chicken farm
producing a steady
stream of new PKK fighters. If Makhmour is demilitarized in
coordination with a general amnesty then refugees can return
to Turkey,
eliminating the PKK issue from KRG-Turkey relations, he said.

UNHCR MEETING ON MAKHMOUR CAMP

19. (C) RRTOffs, UNHCR Country Director for Iraq Janvier de
Riedmatten,
Ninewah Assistant Governor Yousif Ibraheem, and Makhmour
Mayor
Abdulrahman Barzinji met with Sinjari on 5 December to
establish a
mechanism for demilitarization and registration of the

refugees in
Makhmour camp. De Riedmatten told Sinjari that 13,000
Turkish Kurds
live in the camp, and that some 3,700 other Turkish Kurds
live in Dohuk
and Erbil governorates. (Note: According to UNHCR data,
Turkish
Kurdish refugees are Iraq's third-largest refugee population
after
Palestinians and Iranians.)

¶10. (C) Sinjari reported that he had visited Makhmour camp on
November
24 (reftel) with Iraqi Minister of State for National
Security Shirwan
al-Waili and Minister of Displacement and Migration Abd
al-Samad Sultan
and achieved full cooperation from federal and provincial
officials. He
said the technical committee comprised of RRT, UNHCR, Ninewah
Province,
Makhmour city, and KRG representatives will facilitate
voluntary
repatriation in response to Turkish demands that the camp be
closed.
Mosul governor and Makhmour city mayor expressed willingness
to support
demilitarization, census, and registration in the camp.

¶11. (C) Sinjari and De Riedmatten said the Second Division of
the Iraqi
Army in Ninewah will conduct a cordon, curfew, and search of
the camp on
January 17, 2007, upon the written agreement of Iraqi Prime
Minister
Nuri al-Maliki. Afterward, UNHCR, assisted by trained local
teachers,
will carry out a one-day census. Sinjari and De Riedmatten
agreed that
Turkey would only accept a controlled single-day count as
authoritative.
According to De Riedmatten, after compiling the data UNHCR
will issue
photographic registration documents to camp residents and
conduct a
survey of intentions to return to Turkey.

¶12. (C) Following the Sinjari meeting, De Riedmatten and
UNAMI Erbil
officer Rosemary Knight told RRT PolOff that the May
elections in Turkey

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may have a negative impact on PKK issues and suggested that
domestic
pressure for military action may be intensified by election
pressures.
They added that, without amnesty and guarantee of safety from
Turkey,
the demilitarization of Makhmour camp will produce no
reduction in the
camp population.
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